

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF BURNTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29 JULY 2020 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM**

PRESENT

Councillor Evans [in the Chair]

Councillors Banevicius, Birch, Bishop, Brown, D Ennis, L Ennis, Flanagan, Gittings, Greensill, Ho, Kirkham, Loughbrough Rudd, Norman, M Place, R Place, Westwood, Willis-Croft and Woodward

In attendance

G Hunt, Town Clerk

Ms J Minor, Deputy Clerk

T Heminsley, Strategic Community Infrastructure Manager, Staffordshire County Council

Three members of the public

UPDATE BY COUNTY HIGHWAYS

Councillor Evans informed Members that County Councillor Fisher was intending to join us tonight for the highways update, but it is her daughter's final wedding dress fitting tonight [very special for any mum] so she will not be joining us. Councillor Evans stated that Beth Fisher was the youngest ever Chairman of the Town Council and wished her well in her forthcoming marriage.

Councillor Evans welcomed Tim Heminsley, Strategic Community Infrastructure Manager for Staffordshire County Council to the meeting. Mr Heminsley informed Members that Staffordshire County Council, as Highway Authority, has a statutory duty under the Road Traffic Act 1988, Chapter 52, Part 1, Section 39 [3], which states that highway authorities:

- (a) must carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles on roads or parts of roads, other than trunk roads, within their area. The County Council hold the information on a database.
- (b) must, in the light of those studies, take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to prevent such accidents, including the dissemination of information and advice relating to the use of roads, the giving of practical training to road users or any class or description of road users, the construction, improvement, maintenance or repair of roads for which they are the highway authority and other measures taken in the exercise of their powers for controlling, protecting or assisting the movement of traffic on roads.

Mr Heminsley stated that primarily the enforcement of speeding is the responsibility of the Police.

Mr Heminsley showed Members a personal injury collisions graph for the Burntwood area for the period from 1984 to 2019. The blue zig zag line showed a decrease in personal injury collisions which could be due to the installation of air bags and seat belts in cars etc even though the orange line showed an increase in traffic volume over the same period. The grey line indicated a reduction in killed or seriously injured cases. Even though there was a decrease/reduction Mr Heminsley stated that the County Council would not be complacent.

Mr Heminsley gave comparisons between the years 1984 compared with 2019:

- All accidents have reduced by 88% (85 down to 10)
- Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) accidents have reduced by 89% (19 down to 2)
- Number of fatal road collisions has decreased by 100% (4 to 0)
- Traffic volumes in Staffordshire have increased by 31% from 1993 to 2018

Mr Heminsley explained that the County Council had to direct resources where people have been injured and that there were currently no hotspots in Burntwood. Mr Heminsley gave an example of Hill Ridware where the County Council had recently invested approximately £100,000 of public funding [which had been data driven].

Mr Heminsley gave examples of other options [apart from speed humps] for traffic calming/speed reduction to encourage members of the public to reduce their speed:

- Wheelie bin stickers for 30 mph road – applied for through the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership.
- Community Speed Watch.
- Community concern sites for mobile speed enforcement.
- Local county councillor / parish council funded minor traffic calming / speed reduction measures [speed watch devices].
- New developments – some new developments can justify the Council requesting traffic calming to be installed as part of the development. This is done on a case by case basis.

In respect of road repairs Mr Heminsley informed Members that County Councillor Fisher and County Councillor Woodward are directing £20,000 towards road repairs around the Burntwood area in 2020. Mr Heminsley informed Members that the resurfacing of the Skoda roundabout cost in the region of £122,000 and the resurfacing at the pedestrian crossing on the approach to Swan Island cost approximately £26,000.

Mr Heminsley explained that there was currently a programme of surface dressing being carried out around the Burntwood area and showed a slide which included the roads. He explained that there was a small pot of money to draw up a design for the future of the Town namely Sankey's Corner. Mr Heminsley stated that there was currently a Government initiative and funding to promote and encourage walking and particularly cycling. Two areas being considered in Burntwood were:

- Abnalls Lane – consideration of a more permanent road closure on this existing cycle route.
- A5190 Cannock Road between the Skoda island and Five Ways island – feasibility of providing a cycleway along this section of road being considered.

Mr Heminsley explained the Doing Our Bit initiative [we can make Staffordshire an even better place to live and work, despite far less money coming from Government].

Councillor Norman stated that two missing bollards on the Cannock Road had been replaced after two years and asked if this was for safety reasons and if so, why had it not been done earlier. Mr Heminsley confirmed that it was for safety reasons and stated that the bollards should have been replaced earlier.

Councillor Willis-Croft stated that he agreed with Mr Heminsley that cars were getting safer however people speed by Morrisons which is a 30mph zone. Councillor Willis-Croft said that three letters were issued by the Community Speed Watch team before the Police acted and the speed cameras do not work.

Mr Heminsley stated that enforcement against speeding is a Police responsibility. Not all the speed cameras were active [resources issue for the Police] and that community speed watch is a deterrent.

Councillor Birch welcomed the evidence-based approach used by the County Council. He stated that vehicles were not just speeding on a road but also when driving to and from the area. Councillor Birch referred to the grey line on the graph [killed or seriously injured cases] and asked if this was a seasonal issue due to darker nights, wetter roads, and ice. Mr Heminsley thought there was no pattern, but

these accidents appeared to be random. The number of accidents made it difficult to identify any common cause.

Councillor R Place stated that looking at the information gathered on the database was key and explained that there were Hammerwich Parish Councillors present. He explained that one of the Hammerwich Councillors was involved in the Community Speed Watch and that more regular data would be useful. Councillor R Place thanked Mr Heminsley for his informative presentation and invited him to the Hammerwich Parish Council meeting to be held in September.

Councillor Woodward declared an interest as County Councillor for Burntwood North Division and as Leader of the Town Council and thanked Councillor Birch and Councillor Flanagan for all their work in producing a Burntwood wide assessment of outstanding highways defects [some of which had been undertaken during Covid-19]. Councillor Woodward explained that she was receiving less complaints about potholes but more complaints regarding surface dressing and gave an example where the contractors had surface dressed a road but did not fill in the potholes first. Councillor Woodward stated that she was receiving more complaints regarding drains/gully emptying and felt that more jetting was needed and asked if the Town Council compiled a list of say the top ten drains could the Town Council pay for the jetting/clearance.

Mr Heminsley confirmed that he was also receiving less complaints regarding potholes and more about drains/gullies and explained that the County Council were reviewing how the gullies could be tackled. Mr Heminsley explained that A and B roads gullies were cleared out on an annual basis and C and Unclassified roads gullies were cleared out every three years. There may be scope for the Town Council to pay for jetting/clearance of the gullies, but he would need to speak to colleagues with regard to the implications etc.

Councillor Greensill thanked Mr Heminsley for the work carried out at Swan Island however she referred to Farewell Lane and stated that the drains at the top of the road were blocked right up to the top. Councillor Greensill stated that surface dressing had been undertaken in Farewell Lane however the dressing had covered the kerb. She stated that she had spoken to the contractors on the day who had stated that it was not their responsibility to sweep the pavement. Mr Heminsley said that this item should be reported through the "reporting system".

Councillor Evans thanked Mr Heminsley for his presentation.

PUBLIC FORUM

No questions were raised by members of the public.

Councillor Evans reminded Members of the rules of debate which would be enforced during the meeting and that Members were permitted to speak only once on the same subject.

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Bullock, Tapper and Taylor [Dispensation]

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Councillor Ho declared an interest in planning application 20/00806/PNC – Unit 10, Burntwood Town Shopping Centre, Cannock Road, Chase Terrace as he was the applicant.

26. MINUTES

The Chairman reminded Members that the Minutes were for accuracy purposes only.

Councillor Woodward made reference to Minute No. 16 – Renewal of Service Subscription for Employment Law Advice [Page 8] and explained that the County Council and the District Council would consider HR advice but would not spend a long time debating a spend of £1,020 which was just £20 over the Financial Regulations limit for a one price quote.

Councillor Birch made reference to Minute No. 17 – Replacement of Bus Shelter [Page 9] and explained that he had asked for the location of the bus shelter to be reviewed.

Following an unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 25 June 2020 [Minute Nos. 11-23] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

27. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Councillor Evans congratulated Councillor Loughbrough Rudd on the birth of his new babies. With regard to Chairman's engagements, Councillor Evans informed Members that she had raised the flag at Armed Forces Day held at Burntwood Library on 27 June 2020. Councillor Evans thanked Mrs Williams [Friends of Burntwood Library] for her help and assistance on the day.

Councillor Evans thanked staff members who had undertaken and continue to undertake the opening and closing of Church Street Car Park and Burntwood Cemetery.

Councillor Evans took the opportunity to thank the residents of Burntwood for the excellent way most of them have conducted themselves during this awful pandemic. She felt sure that by sticking to the rules it has enabled the community to go about their business, not necessarily in the way they were used to, but in the safest way possible and despite the constraints, they have witnessed superb community spirit where many have been giving up their time to support all those in need, through Burntwood Be A Friend and other organisations and she wanted to take this opportunity to thank them and all NHS and care workers most sincerely, on behalf of the Town Council for all they have done. Councillor Evans, however, stated that there is still a great need to remain vigilant to ensure we do not get a spike here, so as hard as it is, we must continue to wear a mask when necessary, wash hands frequently and do all that has been asked of us in the proper manner, in order to keep safe and protect ourselves and others. The care and kindness we have witnessed shows what a great community we have in Burntwood and long may it continue as we work towards a Better Burntwood.

28. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Councillor Birch explained the current arrangements for planning applications and stated that in his capacity of Chair, he looks at all of the applications. He then identifies those applications that are likely to need further discussion, these applications are circulated to the Committee Members for comments. Applications where he considers that there are no objections are not circulated. Councillor Birch felt that the Town Council should continue with the established method.

Councillor Birch explained the reason for holding the zoom Planning and Development Committee on 15 July 2020 which was due to the Planning Issues Update.

Councillor Flanagan made reference to Minute No. 6 – Planning Issues Update and was pleased to announce that the advert encouraging members from the business community, environment and young people etc to join the Planning Advisory Group had been placed on the Town Council's website with a closing date of 30 September 2020.

It was proposed by Councillor Birch, seconded by Councillor Gittings, and following a unanimous show of hands [with the exception of Councillor Ho] it was

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Development Committee held on 15 July 2020 [Minute Nos. 1-6] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

29. ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING ATTENDANCE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019-20

Councillor R Place referred to paragraph 3.2 under the heading of Legal Requirements and asked why the Town Council publishes their record of attendance of Members when it was not a legal requirement for the Town Council to do so. The Town Clerk stated that this was for transparency purposes.

It was proposed by Councillor Woodward, seconded by Councillor D Ennis, and following an unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the annual Members meeting attendance for the municipal year 2019-20 be received and noted.

30. ANNUAL TREE INSPECTION FOR COULTER LANE BURIAL GROUND

Councillor Norman explained that due to the Town Clerk's extra skills the inspection report had been completed inhouse. Councillor R Place stated that he fully supported the three-year formal tree surveys and that this had been discussed fully at the Leadership meeting which he had been involved in.

Councillor Birch made reference to Minute No. 14 - Annual Tree Inspection at Coulter Lane Burial Ground [Town Council Minutes 25 June 2020 refers] and stated that due to the age and maturity of the trees and the impact on lives, he supported the three year formal tree surveys.

It was proposed by Councillor Woodward, seconded by Councillor Birch, and following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the Town Council approves the adoption of a three-year cycle of formal tree surveys, with annual visual inspections in the intervening years, for all sites under its management.

31. NEW BROADBAND AND TELEPHONE CONTRACT

Councillor R Place stated that it was a very good quotation which would save the Town Council money and covers all of the Town Council's requirements.

Councillor D Ennis explained that in fact five quotations had been obtained for the work which would save the Town Council money. Councillor D Ennis stated that the analogue phone system was being phased out and that the VoIP [Voice Over Internet Protocol] was the future.

It was proposed by Councillor D Ennis, seconded by Councillor Woodward and following an unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the Town Council appoint the Focus Group to provide its broadband and telephone services.

32. CORONAVIRUS CONTINGENCY PLAN UPDATE

Councillor Woodward made reference to the opening of Church Street Car Park which provided a better access to Chasewater for residents of Burntwood. Councillor Woodward stated that she was a co-friend of Chasewater Friends. Councillor Woodward explained that she had recently visited the car park and found that one car was parked in the car park and seven cars were parked on the road. She visited the car park later the same day with Mrs Williams, a member of Chasewater Friends, and found that two cars were parked in the car park and eleven cars were parked on the road. Councillor Woodward stated that there was no visible signage on the road and Staffordshire County Council should be encouraged to improve the signage which could encourage members of the public to use it.

Councillor Birch also stated that he was a member of Chasewater Friends and it may be a matter of use it or lose it and we must encourage people to use it by directing people to Chasewater via that route. Councillor Birch made reference to linking in with Chasewater Friends and perhaps the starting point for nature walks could be Church Street Car Park as well as the Halloween lantern parade.

Councillor D Ennis explained that he had been in talks with local residents as this was an asset to Burntwood and that he had already lobbied the County Council regarding signage as he felt that good signage was key as the usage at weekends should be higher than it is.

Councillor Greensill stated that a relative of hers did not know about the car park and that signage was needed.

The Town Clerk explained that the opening and closing of the car park was currently undertaken by staff members however this would not be sustainable after September.

Councillor R Place stated that the Town Council must find a way of keeping the car park open if that is what the Council wants to do and asked if costings could be sought.

Councillor Woodward took on the concerns of the Town Clerk and stated let us see how it is used and re-assess in September.

It was proposed by Councillor Woodward, seconded by Councillor D Ennis, and following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the coronavirus contingency plan update be received and noted.

33. GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

Councillor Woodward explained that the general power of competence would give the Town Council more flexibility in the future and allows the Town Council to give grants to individuals [Stephen Sutton Bursary].

It was proposed by Councillor Woodward, seconded by Councillor D Ennis, and following an unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the Town Council resolve that from 29 July 2020 until the next relevant Annual Meeting of the Council that having met the conditions of eligibility as defined in the Localism Act 2011 and SI 965 the Parish Councils [General Power of Competence] [Prescribed Conditions] Order 2012, adopts the General Power of Competence.

34. BETTER BURNTWOOD FUND

Councillor D Ennis stated that helping our community was key and that £27,000 had been allocated in the budget [for small grants of £100 to £500; for large grants of £500 to £3,000; the hardship grant and for the education bursary].

Councillor D Ennis stated that the Better Burntwood Fund would be launch on 01 August with a closing date of 30 September 2020.

It was proposed by Councillor D Ennis, seconded by Councillor Woodward, and following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the update on the Better Burntwood Fund be received and noted.

[The Meeting closed at 7.24 pm]

Signed

Date